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Read: The Book of Enoch
Messianic Prophecy Edition

"Time-Capsule to the Last Generation"

How tall were the pre-flood giants, really?

Living as we do in an era when the Book of Enoch is returning to the mainstream and away from obscurity, it is taking a while for us all to get acquainted with this book which has been so neglected for the past two millennia. This being the case, there are a number of misconceptions and incorrect assumptions being promoted via the web concerning what the Book of Enoch teaches and what conditions were like in the days of Noah and the pre-flood world. These erroneous assumptions were probably to be expected given the many, many centuries that exposition and commentary upon the Book of Enoch has been lacking. We're only starting to get acquainted with this book in the West, all while respect for and acceptance of the book is exploding in our world.

{Note to the reader}: The following page is being offered by someone who believes the Book of Enoch is a book of the Bible, because it has always been included in some believers' Bibles as far back as anyone can determine. More than that, I believe the Book of Enoch is the authentic writing of the Biblical patiarch Enoch, born seventh from Adam. However, not all that is being said about this book in our day is true. ~ RI Burns

Myth: The giants were hundreds, if not thousands of feet tall

How tall were the pre-flood giants, really?

Actually, the Book of Enoch originally probably did not say how tall the giants were. Contrary to Charles, Schodde and Laurence, Enoch 7:2, contains a scribal corruption in the Ethiopic.

On this point, I agree with some modern textual scholars that the Greek version of Enoch 7:2 is closer to original.

Nickelsburg/Vanderkam translates verse 2 from a Greek text which says nothing about the height of the giants.

> "And they conceived from them and bore to them great giants. And the giants begot Nephilim, and to the Nephilim were born Elioud- and they were growing in accordance with their greatness".

Bottom line is, originally, the Book of Enoch very likely did not say how tall the giants were.

What was the basis of the mistake in Enoch 7:2? It is a known fact that proper names (like "Elioud") and numbers (for example 3,000 ells) suffer the most from scribal copying and translating over the millennia. Presumably, in ancient times a scribal copyist did not understand the proper name for Elioud, and assumed it was referring to the "ell" telling us how tall were the giants.

To be clear, "3,000 ells" in the Charles translation, is not an error of English translation. It began with an ancient copyist's mistake which changed a verse about the "3" races of Watcher offspring, (one of those races was called "Elioud"), into a comment about the giant's height. "Elioud" became "ells" and "3" became "3,000" in my understanding. George Nickelsburg and James Vanderkam (as do Daniel Olson, and John Baty) translate a Greek fragment (Synchellus) for the verse to restore a more original reading. The only mistake by translators was in not discerning the ancient scribal error and ferreting out the better reading. Perhaps the scribal /copyist error WAS a translation error if when the error was introduced the scribe was not able to translate the verse and erred in that way. But in the English translations they do not seem to be in error, just in poor selection of their underlying, eclectic text for use before translating to English.

It is interesting to note, that John Baty, in his 1839 translation of Enoch, very early on detected and solved this textual problem!

How Enoch 7:2 has Suffered in English Translation from 1883 to the present: John Baty had it right in 1839

"And there were born unto them three sorts, the first were great giants, and to the giants were born Nephilim, and to the Nephilim were born Elioud."

Robert Henry Charles reverted to the problematic text in 1883

"And they bare great giants, whose height was three thousand ells."

Nickelsburg / Vanderkam asserted the fix again in 2004

"And bore to them great giants. And the giants begot Nephilim, and to the Nephilim were born Elioud."

Besides all this, in Biblical interpretation, we believe every significant matter should be substantiated by two or three witnesses— I see no reason to believe the pre-flood giants were different in size than the post-flood ones.

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